

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 /094 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2153

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY

AMMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY 2756

AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 4792

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: UP-DATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE
INTERNAL SETTLEMENT

REF: PRETORIA 3756

1. SUMMARY: THE SECURITY SITUATION IN RHODESIA CONTINUES TO
DETERIORATE AS INTIMIDATION BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT BECOMES MORE
EFFECTIVE AND IS OPPOSED BY THE RHODESIAN DEFENSE FORCES AS WELL
AS PRIVATE FORCES OF MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE. WHITE FARMERS QUESTION
WHETHER THEY CAN PLANT NEXT YEAR'S TOBACCO CROP AND BOTH
MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE'S POLITICAL FOLLOWING DIMINISH. AN ELECTION
SEEMS DOUBTFUL. SMITH IS RESOURCEFUL AND WILL PROBABLY TAKE
STEPS TO TRY TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE. AN ALL-PARTIES
MEETING IS ONE OF THEM AND STILL A GOOD POSSIBILITY.
END SUMMARY.

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2. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF JULY, THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUING
DETERIORATION IN THE PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS OF THE INTERNAL
SETTLEMENT. IN THREE FIELDS -- SECURITY, THE ECONOMY, AND
POLITICS -- THE POSITION OF THE CURRENT REGIME HAS WEAKENED.
THIS IS NOT TO SAY IT COULD NOT SURVIVE FOR A LONG TIME -- AT
LEAST WELL INTO 1979 -- BUT THE CHANCES OF ITS CARRYING OUT

ITS PLANNED PROGRAM UNDER THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT TO HOLD ELECTIONS AND TURN OVER AUTHORITY TO A MAJORITY RULE GOVERNMENT BY DECEMBER 31 HAVE BECOME VERY UNLIKELY.

3. THE SECURITY SITUATION CONTINUES TO WORSEN. THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE DID NOT DENY A REPORT THAT OF 208 (WHITE) FARMS IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE COUNTRY (MATABELELAND), 117 HAD BEEN ABANDONED. THERE IS INCREASING INTIMIDATION. NON-POLITICAL AFRICAN LEADERS IN THE URBAN AREAS ARE SUBJECT TO PRESSURE PARTICULARLY FROM THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. A GROWING NUMBER SEEM TO HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THE EVENTUAL VICTORY OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, LIKE THE TWO PROMINENT MATABELE BUSINESSMEN WHO RESIGNED FROM THE RHODESIA BROADCASTING CORPORATION BOARD TWO DAYS AFTER BEING APPOINTED AND A FEW HOURS, IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED, AFTER HAVING BEEN VISITED BY PF REPRESENTATIVES WHO TOLD THEM IT WOULD BE HEALTHIER TO LEAVE THE BOARD. THEY HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY LESS PROMINENT MEN FROM AN AREA WHICH CAN BE MORE EASILY PROTECTED. THE THREAT OF URBAN GUERRILLA WAR-FARE IS GROWING. AFRICANS IN RURAL AREAS BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE WAR AS THEY ARE CAUGHT BETWEEN INCREASINGLY RUTHLESS ARMED FORCES. THE AFRICAN FARMERS ASSN. LEADERS SAY CASUALTIES ARE HIGHER THAN REPORTED. NOT ONLY ARE THEIR MEMBERS KILLED AND WOUNDED, BUT THEY ARE FORCED TO FEED BOTH SIDES AND THEIR DAUGHTERS ARE ABUSED BY THEM. PRIVATE ARMIES OWING ALLEGIANCE TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE ARE BEGINNING TO OPERATE AGAINST EACH OTHER AND THE PF. WHITE MILITARY MORALE HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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FALLEN BUT IS IN NO DANGER OF BREAKING. A WELL PUBLICIZED MEETING IN WANKIE AT WHICH THREE GOVERNMENT MINISTERS WERE TO SPEAK DREW SEVEN PERSONS AND HAD TO BE CANCELLED. ANOTHER IN THE SOUTHEAST ADDRESSED BY GABELLAH AND CHIKEREMA (MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE'S VICE PRESIDENTS) STARTED OUT WITH 240 LISTENERS WHO, AFTER HECKLING THEM, GRADUALLY DRIFTED AWAY LEAVING 20 BY THE END OF THE MEETING. THESE DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PF INTIMIDATION ARE INTENDED TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THE REGIME THAT IT CANNOT RUN ELECTIONS IN DECEMBER. MID-LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS CONFIRMED THE VIRUTAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF RUNNING AN ELECTION TO NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT JOHN BURNS. IN GENERAL THE CONFIDENCE AMONG BOTH BLACK AND WHITE THAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT CAN PROVIDE AN END TO THE VIOLENCE HAS VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED.

4. PERHAPS THE MOST SERIOUS SET-BACK TO THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, HOWEVER, IS THE DETERIORATING STATE OF THE ECONOMY. RHODESIA'S MAJOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER IS TOBACCO. IT IS A LABOR INTENSIVE CROP DEPENDENT ON LARGE FARM WORK FORCES WHICH HAVE BECOME A MAJOR TARGET FOR INTIMIDATION BY GUERRILLA FORCES. INVESTMENT IN NEW SEEDLINGS BY TOBACCO FARMERS IS GREAT. THE HEAD OF THE TOBACCO GROWERS ASSN. HAS TOLD US THAT

ITS FARMERS IN MANY AREAS OF THE COUNTRY WILL NOT PROCEED WITH PLANTING NEXT YEAR'S CROP IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER IF THE SECURITY SITUATION DOES NOT IMPROVE. A SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN THE TOBACCO CROP WOULD AFFECT THE WHOLE ECONOMY, ITS FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS, AND EVENTUALLY THE LIVELIHOOD OF A LARGE PART OF THE WHITE POPULATION. IT WOULD REQUIRE SOUTH AFRICA TO STEP UP SHARPLY ITS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS "LOANS" WITH LITTLE PROSPECT OF REPAYMENT.

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5. THE POLITICAL FOLLOWING OF THE TWO MAJOR INTERNAL NATIONALIST LEADERS, MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, HAS FALLEN WHILE NKOMO IS INCREASINGLY LOOKED TO AS AN INDISPENSABLE FIGURE IN A FUTURE GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, NINE OF SIXTEEN MEETINGS OF THE TWO LEADERS HAVE HAD TO BE CANCELLED FOR INSUFFICIENT ATTENDANCE. SITHOLE IS UNABLE TO GATHER CROWDS OF ANY SIZE. EVEN MUZOREWA COULD ONLY BRING 200 TO A MEETING ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SALISBURY RECENTLY. URBAN AREAS WHERE MUZOREWA USED TO BE ABLE TO CLAIM SUPPORT (LIKE THE UNIVERSITY) APPEAR TO HAVE GONE FOR ONE OR THE OTHER OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT LEADERS; SOME SAY MUGABE, OTHERS NKOMO. MUZOREWA'S UANC IS BADLY DIVIDED. THE INTELLECTUAL AND URBAN LEADERSHIP IS FALLING AWAY, LEAVING POWER IN THE HANDS OF APPOINTED

TRIBAL AND FAMILY FRIENDS OF MUZOREWA AND CHIKEREMA'S
OLD FROLIZI GROUP FROM THE ZEZERU TRIBE. THE BISHOP'S
EFFORT A WEEK AGO TO DEMONSTRATE HIS SUPPORT AMONG
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GUERRILLAS IN THE MSANA TRIBAL TRUST LAND AND MEETING OF
PROVINCIAL LEADERS IN SALISBURY TO EXPEL HIS CRITICS AND
REAFFIRM HIS LEADERSHIP WILL HELP SOMEWHAT (THOUGH MANY OF THE
ONLOOKERS AT MSANA WERE SAID TO HAVE
BEEN BUSED IN FROM SALISBURY). THESE DEMONSTRATIONS ARE
UNLIKELY TO ALLOW HIM TO RECOUP VERY MUCH. THOUGH HE
STILL HAS A LARGE FOLLOWING AND ONE SHOULD NOT UNDER-
ESTIMATE HIS SHREWDNESS OR AUTHORITY, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY
THAT HE CAN DO ANYTHING TO HALT HIS CONTINUED IDENTIFICATION
WITH A FAILING CAUSE AND CONSEQUENT LOSS OF SUPPORT.

6. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT APPEARS INCREASINGLY
DOUBTFUL THAT THE REGIME CAN IN FACT CARRY OUT THE
ELECTIONS WHICH IT PROPOSES FOR EARLY DECEMBER WITHOUT
A CRESCENDO OF VIOLENCE, FURTHER DISPIRITING OF THE WHITE
POPULATION, AND THE PROSPECT OF A REAL ECONOMIC CRISIS.

7. THE ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO SMITH ARE THE SAME AS
REPORTED EARLIER. HE CAN PROCEED WILLY-NILLY ON THE PATH
ESTABLISHED BY THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT. HE IS VERY AWARE
OF THE CONSEQUENCES, HOWEVER, AS ARE MOST OF THE AFRICAN
AND WHITE LEADERS (MUZOREWA, CHIKEREMA, SITHOLE, AND
THEIR IMMEDIATE FOLLOWERS BEING PERHAPS THE SOLE EXCEPTIONS).
ALTERNATIVELY, HE COULD ADMIT THAT ELECTIONS ARE NOT POSSIBLE,
AND EITHER PROLONG THE PRESENT SITUATION OR TURN OVER THE
GOVERNMENT TO COALITION OF THE PRESENT INTERNAL
LEADERS. THE FIRST OF THESE TWO SEEMS THE MOST LIKELY.
SMITH AND SOME OF THE AFRICAN LEADERS HAVE BEEN SUGGESTING
IT PUBLICLY AND IT HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION
AT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS. I BELIEVE IT WOULD SOON
RESULT IN SOME KIND OF A FORCEFUL INTERVENTION, PROBABLY
FROM THE SECURITY FORCES, PERHAPS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN
ENCOURAGEMENT. FINALLY, SMITH COULD TURN TO AN ALL-PARTIES
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MEETING, AND I BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE HIS PREFERRED COURSE
IF HE CAN GET HIS INTERNAL NATIONALIST COLLEAGUES TO
ACCEPT IT AND IF HE SEES THE POSSIBILITY OF A SETTLEMENT EMERGING
FROM IT. EVEN IF HE DOES NOT SEE A SOLUTION FROM IT,
HE RECOGNIZES THAT IT WOULD PUT HIM IN A STRONGER
INTERNATIONAL POSITION THAN IF HE HAD NOT TRIED.

8. SMITH WILL CAST AROUND FOR A WAY OUT. HE HAS GREAT FAITH THAT SOMETHING WILL TURN UP WHICH HE WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TO STRENGTHEN HIS OWN POSITION AND PERMIT A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW- I.E., ONE WHICH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ASSURES MAINTENANCE OF THE WHITES' POSITION. HE IS CONFIDENT, FLEXIBLE, RESOURCEFUL, AND QUITE WILLING TO TAKE RISKS--THE OPPOSITE OF MUZOREWA. THE NEXT MONTHS ARE LIKELY TO BE ACTIVE AS THE SEARCH FOR A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION CONTINUES.

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